

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7004 of the First Extraordinary Session

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James Polk Cooley of Rockwood.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of James Polk Cooley, a prominent East Tennessee trial attorney who practiced law for seventy-two years; and

WHEREAS, Polk Cooley was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in Rockwood on May 19, 1926, Mr. Cooley was the son of John Lewis Cooley and Anna Pearl Daniel Cooley and the younger brother of June and Daniel; and

WHEREAS, upon his high school graduation, Polk Cooley enlisted in the United States Navy Air Corps in 1944; shortly thereafter, he suffered injuries in a car crash and served on a destroyer patrolling waters off the East and West Coasts until he was honorably discharged in 1946; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cooley took advantage of the new GI Bill, studying law at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, during the day and working the night shift at Kern's Bakery; he was one of the youngest, if not the youngest, person to pass the Tennessee Bar Exam at the age of twenty-one, and at the time of his death, he held the oldest active Tennessee Bar number; and

WHEREAS, after law school, he returned home to Rockwood, where he practiced law with Lloyd McCluen; initially, he built a law practice on debt collection, title research, and divorce cases, and he took contingency fees in civil cases against insurance companies; over time, he became a well-regarded criminal defense attorney, and he did not curtail trial work with juries until the age of eighty-seven; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cooley was an active and devout member of First Christian Church, a dedicated Rotarian for more than fifty years, and a member of the Rockwood Masonic Lodge; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Polk Cooley was the proud father of Theodore "Ted" Michael Cooley, James "Jim" Polk Cooley, Jr., Patrick "Pat" Charles Cooley, and David "Dave" Glen Cooley and the devoted grandfather of eleven grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren; he is lovingly remembered by his niece and nephews, Nancy-Ann Min DeParle, Phillip Min, and Patrick Min; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cooley leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of James Polk Cooley, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Cooley.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.